

McDowell

'Step by Step' Watch on China A-Test Told

Congressman's Report Brings Charge by Colleague of Security Breach After Briefing

Exclusive to The Times from a Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Rep. Harris McDowell (D-Del.) told a news conference Wednesday in Wilmington, Del., that the United States watched "step by step" preparations for last week's Communist Chinese atomic test explosion.

In Washington, Rep. Wayne L. Hays (R-Ohio) promptly charged that McDowell had made public secret information. Both congressmen are members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

McDowell told newsmen that construction of the tower from which the Red Chinese nuclear device was detonated last Friday had been watched "step by step."

May Have Pictures

Asked if the United States had photographs of the actual atomic test, McDowell replied "possibly."

Photographs of construction operations, McDowell said, were obtained through "intelligence and telecommunications systems."

The information allegedly resulted from a secret briefing at the State Department for congressional leaders on Tuesday.

Both Hays and McDowell attended the briefing, which State Department sources said was "highly classified."

Defense officials declined to comment on the statements attributed to McDowell and Hays. They refused to say if military security had been violated.

Stories based on the McDowell press conference quoted him as saying Secretary of State Dean Rusk said

U.S. spy satellites took photographs so clear that the State department could see erection of the test tower.

"With enemies like McDowell," a statement released by Hays' Washington office declared, "the Chinese Communists need no friends."

"The action of Congressman McDowell in making public the secret information he received in the State Department briefing Tuesday, especially the fact he had revealed that we knew of the Chinese atomic progress by means of photographs by satellite, would be of unquestionable and inestimable value to the Chinese Communists," the Hays statement said.

Denies 'Break'

Hays said McDowell gave the Chinese Communists "the biggest intelligence break they ever got" from the United States.

McDowell denied there had been a security break.

He said he used the terms "intelligence and telecommunications systems" in disclosing how the information was obtained in Washington.

By "telecommunications systems," he said he meant only such well-publicized satellites as the orbiting communications satellite which relayed television pictures from Tokyo Olympics.

The Associated Press reported that Rep. Chet Hollifield (D-Calif.) last Sunday said photos taken by U-2 spy planes provided the United States with intelligence that the Chinese were developing an atomic device.